

i42 KIDERLEN-

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of the deal was the withdrawal of Russia's opposition to the Bagdad railway in return for German recognition of her predominance in North Persia. The material symbol of reconciliation was to be a branch from Bagdad to Khanikin, where it was to meet a line from Teheran constructed under Russian auspices. Though the railway connection was never made, the Potsdam discussions rendered Russo-German relations more friendly than at any time since the Bjorko honeymoon*

Family relations still counted for something, and the old argument that the Emperors must stand together against the revolutionary flood had not lost all effect. The *dtmte* lasted till the Balkan wars revived antagonism between Russia and Austria, and consequently between the Central Powers and the Triple Entente. So far as Persia and the Bagdad railway were concerned, the Potsdam negotiations were successful enough to arouse suspicions of Sazonoff in Paris and London; but in the larger issue of the grouping of the Powers there was no essential change. In drawing nearer to St. Petersburg Germany did not move an inch away from Vienna. Neither Germany nor Russia expected to be attacked by the other, but nobody could tell what Austria might attempt in the Balkans. Austria, as the Russians were often reminded by Berlin, was an independent state. Here was the snag in Russo-German relations, for Austro-Russian rivalry in the Near East was too old and too acute to be removed by Kiderlen or anyone else.

Before the Potsdam agreement was signed the Foreign Minister's attention was once more called to Morocco, which confronted him with the most difficult task of his life. The treaty of 1909, it was hoped, in addition to producing a political *detente*, would substantially benefit both French

and German
trade. Everything depended on the spirit in
which it was
worked, for in the absence of goodwill on both
sides the
occasions of friction were infinite. While the
two Govern-
ments were conciliatory enough, greedy
commercial firms in
both countries played for their own hand. The
opportunities
of exploitation were to be found in mines, public
works and
railways, yet in all three directions unexpected
difficulties
arose. In the first the claims of the
Mannesmann brothers
were particularly exorbitant. In the second the
projected
monopoly by French and German interests was
challenged by
the British Government in the name of the Act
of Algeciras.
In the third sphere, that of railways, strategic
and therefore